

# U. S. Embassy Dushanbe ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

INSIDE THIS  
ISSUE:

ISSUE 8

JANUARY, 2011

Embassy News 2-6

Alumni Events 7-11

Alumni Success Stories 12-15

Alumni News From Abroad 13-16

Alumni Updates 17

Resources 18-19

## USEFUL LINKS:

### STATE ALUMNI

Your Global  
Community

[alumni.state.gov](http://alumni.state.gov)

[Join U.S. Govern-  
ment Alumni,  
Tajikistan page on  
Facebook](#)

## Embassy Supported 'DesignDushanbe' Fashion Show and Raised Over \$4000 for Prevention of Domestic Violence

FLEX alumni, supported by a grant from Public Diplomacy's alumni funds, played an integral role in organizing DesignDushanbe, a fashion show highlighting local Tajik women small business owners and fashion designers. Over 300 expats and Tajiks attended the fashion show held at the Hyatt in October 2010, featuring clothes of local boutiques and young Tajik designers whose latest fashions were sashayed down the catwalk by newly trained models. The event raised money for the Bovari (Believe)



*Young Tajik designers present the latest fashions by newly trained models.*

Crisis Center and the Burn Unit at the Dushanbe City Hospital where women who have attempted self-immolation because of their difficult situations at home are treated. In unfortunate Tajik 'fashion,' the event faced several obstacles including interference from the Rector of the Technological University who claimed that the young designers affiliated with the University's Design Institute did not have permission to participate, and objected to show's cause by stating that domestic violence isn't a real problem in Tajikistan. FLEX alumni responded by rewording parts of the program and the show went on. The designers' special blend of Tajik and modern fashion was a big hit.

## U.S. Embassy Brings Native American Performance Group to Tajikistan



*The musicians performed unique Native American ritual dances for Tajik audiences at the Bactria Cultural Center, October 15, 2010.*

The U.S. Embassy funded the visit of Buffalo Big Mountain (BBM) and his 3 colleagues - Bluejay Littlejohn, James Arthur White Wolf Big Mountain, and Sebastian Snowsnake Big Mountain - from October 10-16. The Embassy sponsored a series of workshops, speaking engagements, and performances in Dushanbe, Sughd and Khatlon. The musicians not only performed their unique Native American ritual dances for Tajik audiences, but they also collaborated with Tajik folklore masters and students.

BBM began their program in Dushanbe with a jam session with local musicians

at the Gurminj Museum the evening of October 10. On October 11, they performed at a public high school in Sarband and the American Corner in Qurghon-Teppa for 30 participants of the U.S. Embassy's English Access Microscholarship Program, which provides free English language classes for disadvantaged youth.

On October 12, the group traveled to the Sughd region where they performed at the square in front of the Asiri Public Library of Khujand, where the American Corner is located. On October 13 and October 14, BBM met with participants of the U.S. Embassy's English Access Microscholarship

classes and alumni of different USG-sponsored programs in Kanibadam, Istaravshan and Ghonchi. The students also got a chance to speak with the performers and demonstrate their knowledge of English and American history. On October 15, BBM performed at Bactria Cultural Center and at the 800th Anniversary of Moscow Square in Dushanbe. Many people in Tajikistan have only seen Native Americans in movies, and these performances gave audience members a chance to see and speak to real representatives of a different culture.

Since 1991, The United States Government has worked to strengthen the relationship between the people of the United States and Tajikistan. The U.S. Embassy’s Educational and Cultural programs promote cross cultural understanding through music, art, education and cultural exchange. Each year, approximately 340 Tajik students study in the United States, and more than 170 Tajik citizens go to the United States on U.S. Government funded programs such as FLEX, JFDP, MUSKIE, TEA, UGRAD, Community Connections, IVLP and Fulbright.

## American Hip-Hop Dancers Visit Tajikistan



***Chris Thomas talks to Access students in Istaravshan after their hip-hop dance workshop***

Based on requests from program alumni and other youth, PAS Dushanbe funded the visit of hip-hop dancers Michael Parks Masterson and Chris Thomas from November 29 to December 6 and sponsored a series of dance workshops for youth in Dushanbe, Sughd, and Khatlon. They began their program in Dushanbe with a dance workshop for high school students at Gymnasium 74, where an English Language Fellow has an English Through Dance program. In Khujand, they led a workshop with students at Commerce University and then held a second workshop at the American Corner, where a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant has a regular English Through Music class. Michael and Chris also taught dance routines to more than 75 participants of PD’s English Access Microscholarship classes and to exchange alumni in Konibodom, Istaravshan, and Ghonchi and answered students’ questions about American dance styles. On December 3-4, Michael and Chris met with Tajik hip-hop dancers, modern dancers, and choreographers from Dushanbe’s

Padida Theater. After rehearsals for a show, Michael and Chris chose four local hip-hop dancers and took them to Sarband, where together they led a workshop for students from a public high school. Although there was only a short period of time for the rehearsal, Michael and Chris collaborated with both professional and amateur Tajik dancers for an hour-long performance at the Russian Drama Theater in Dushanbe that was filled to capacity. The event not only spotlighted the American and Tajik dancers, but also gave about 25 audience members the chance to learn a short hip-hop routine through an impromptu on-stage dance workshop.



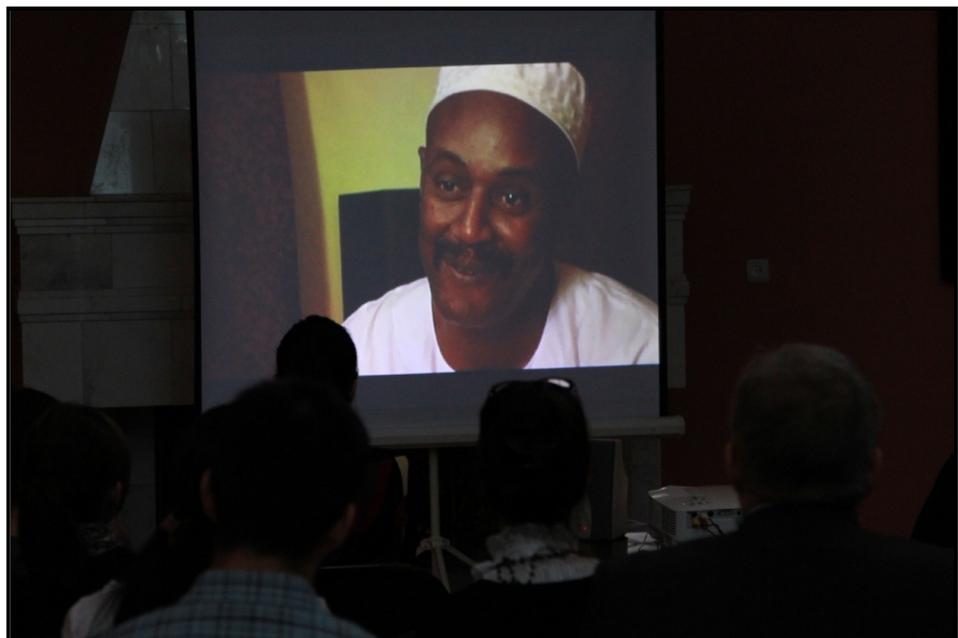
***Michael leads Access students in Ghonchi through a warm-up before their hip-hop workshop***

## Ambassador Gross leads Discussion about Muslims in America

*An open discussion between FLEX alumni and the Ambassador on issues of religion and politics*



PAS organized a screening of a film about Muslims in America with a discussion afterwards led by Ambassador Gross at his residence. Thirty USG program alumni, most of them FLEX program alumni, came to the Ambassador's house and watched a series of short films about Muslims in America. Afterwards, students discussed the film and talked about the opportunities and challenges for practicing Muslims in Tajikistan. The participants were very excited to have the opportunity to discuss issues of religion and politics in an open environment, and offered frank insights about the state of freedom of expression in Tajikistan. The EU Ambassador also participated in the discussion and highlighted differences between Europe and the United States.



## PAS Reaches out to Students in Smaller Cities



*Students in Isfara collecting information, October 11, 2010*

During the second week of October PAS staff participated in educational fairs in the northern cities of Isfara and Istaravshan. In both locations, PD educational assistants distributed information and gave presentations about our exchange programs to hundreds of university students, school children, teachers, and professors. In addition to information about Post's educational programs, the staff distributed the Tajik version of "Mosques in America", maps of the U.S., Forum Magazine, information about our American Corners, Russian versions of "Human Rights Now" and "Cultural Preservation in South and Central Asia", and audio CDs in Dari on the life of President Obama. While Post has recently participated in several educational fairs in Tajikistan's larger cities, this is the first time they were organized in these two smaller locations. The students and teachers were very interested in the materials that Post provided.

## International Education Week Celebration

Activities for International Education Week were organized from November 15th to November 19th in Tajikistan. The first day of the International Education Week began with the educational fair at the Bactria Cultural Center, where a number of local and international educational organizations such as ACCELS, Education USA, IREX, OSI, Bactria Cultural Center, Tempus, DAAD, UCA, AKHP, and Multikid took part. The Cultural Affairs Officer McKenzie Milanowski and the representative of the Ministry of Education Rajabali Sangov gave opening remarks at the educational fair welcoming everyone and encouraging students and teachers to use this opportunity to obtain information on exchange programs from different organizations. Information and materials on educational programs were distributed to the students at the fair. The U.S. Embassy distributed information on the different USG programs, maps of the U.S., information about American Corners, Russian versions of "Human Rights Now" and "Cultural Preservation in South and Central Asia", and audio CDs in Dari on the life of President Obama, pens with the Embassy's Facebook page, and answered the questions of students and teachers. A press release of "Open Doors 2010" was also available, which provided information about the number of students from Tajikistan studying in the U.S. and other countries.

During this week sessions, lectures, and programs highlighting exchange programs were organized by different organizations. The U.S. Embassy organized lectures at the American Corners and the



*Presentation of ELF Sharon Saternus on USG programs, Khujand American Corner, November 17, 2010*

Universities of Dushanbe, Khorog, Kulyab and Khujand. With the assistance of American Corner Coordinators, English Language Fellows, and English Language Assistants were involved in events and delivered presentations on education.

## American Fulbrighters and English Teachers Welcomed



*Group photo with ELFs, ETAs and Fulbrighters, PAO residence, October 3, 2010*

The Public Affairs Section held a barbeque to welcome all the American English Language Fellows (ELFs) and Fulbright Scholars, Students, Specialists and English Teaching Assistants. Other English teachers and issue specialists from the community were also invited to the barbeque in hopes of creating a supportive network to help assist ELFs and Fulbrighters with their work and research. The gathering was a good opportunity for everyone to meet as this Post has many more Americans in Tajikistan this year than in the past. The barbeque had a 'pink' theme, as PAS is 'tickled pink' that all these excellent ELFs and Fulbrighters chose to come to Tajikistan.

## 10,000 Books Donated



*PAO Rachel Cooke donates 482 books to Tajik National University*

On September 30, Public Affairs Officer Rachel Cooke participated in a book donation ceremony at the Economic Faculty of Tajik National University in Dushanbe. The 482 university level, English language textbooks that were donated were symbolic of 10,000 textbooks that were donated to 26 universities, secondary schools, libraries and organizations throughout Tajikistan over the past several months. Exchange program alumni assisted the Public Affairs Section by sorting, stamping and delivering the books. In addition to this donation ceremony here in Dushanbe, Rachel participated in another ceremony at the Commerce University in Khujand in August 2010. The faculty and students at the National University's Economic Faculty plan to create a resource center with this donation.

## Classroom Expectations and Rules Lecture

On September 25, Jazgul Arikbaeva IREX Kyrgyzstan Program Coordinator held a lecture for three TEA alumni on Classroom Expectations and Rule in Khujand. The lecture included the effects of student misbehavior on the learning process in the classroom. During the lecture, teachers worked on designing classroom rules and expectations to better address these issues.

Teachers expanded their understanding about the relationship between expectations and rules, and drew links between both to better communicate appropriate behavior with students. Teachers learned about the distinctive features of rules, which include being clear, reasonable, and specific, and this clarifies the expectations of teachers in the classroom. Additionally they had a chance to watch a short video containing rules designed by teaching professionals in the U.S. to handle misbehavior.

The lecture ended with a group discussion about specific misbehavior situations, which created a good platform to exchange opinions, ideas, and lessons learned among teachers. Overall the lecture was a great success among TEA alumni. Teachers were very interested in sharing their new knowledge with other teachers and thanked Jazgul Arikbaeva for new insight in addressing misbehavior to create a better environment for teaching.



**Jazgul Arikbaeva (second from left) with TEA alumni in Khujand, Tajikistan**



**UGRAD alumni during group work activities**

On September 26, seven UGRAD alumni gathered for the Fundraising training at a local business center "Dusti Amirkhon" in Khujand, Tajikistan. The event started with a welcoming remark from Radik Nabiulin, IREX Tajikistan EPD Senior Program Officer. Following Radik's opening remarks, IREX Kyrgyzstan EPD Program Coordinator Jazgul Arikbaeva delivered a six session training covering fundraising in the non-profit sector, grant writing, and the management process. Alumni were placed in small working groups according to their interests in a various types of non-profit organizations.

Each group brainstormed and came up with an idea for community service. Through their participation in the training sessions, they gained deeper insight into the fundraising planning process.

Participants received training on creating a fundraising team, developing relevant skills, and relationship building with individual supporters through effective communication. In the course of the training Jazgul Arikbaeva explained a variety of methods to reach out to donors for the benefit of community needs. As a part of the special events session, alumni groups presented special events they would organize to raise additional funds to support their community services. Additionally, alumni were given an introduction to grant writing and management as one effective means of securing additional funds.

The feedback showed that the event was successful. It allowed participants the opportunity to benefit from active learning environments when they not only learned from a trainer but also from one another. This approach created an open environment to brainstorm about innovative ideas and approaches to fundraising.

## Halloween Celebrations at Kindergartens

On October 29, students of kindergartens 3 and 10 of Kistakuz village celebrated Halloween. Teachers, parents, and representatives of Jamoat Resource Center were the guests at this holiday celebration. The program included information about Halloween and was also compared with the harvest holiday in Tajikistan, which is called "Иди мөхрғон". During the performance the children showed their knowledge of English gained during two months. The kids sang English songs, danced, recited poems, performed dialogues, participated in competitions, and asked riddles. The English teacher Muazzama Rasulova decorated the hall and organized a fun and interesting program. Roziya Jarkinzoda the Project Coordinator and USG alumna, brought balloons, colored paper, fruits, vegetables, and presents for the kindergarten students. Everybody enjoyed the party.



*Kids of the kindergartens #3 and #10" of Kistakuz village celebrate "Halloween"*

## Alumni Networking Dinner



*Michael J.G. Cain talks about "How to Help the Vulnerable with Energy in Tajikistan"*

On November 6, Muskie alumni had a Networking Dinner. Embassy Program Specialist Dr. Michael J.G. Cain joined the dinner and facilitated a discussion on "How to help the Vulnerable with Energy in Tajikistan".

The discussion included obstacles to energy provision in Tajikistan, international challenges, management and governance problems, decentralized electricity, and existing small HHP capacity. After introducing the concept of decentralized electricity and small hydro power capacity, some alumni discussed how to turn these theories into practice.

Some alumna greatly benefitted from this dinner discussion, including Nana Baramidze, a Muskie alum from Georgia who currently works for OSCE Tajikistan as a Environmental Officer. She was able to receive new information and share her experiences, which was beneficial for both her Muskie and OSCE colleagues.

## Charity Movie Show

On October 2, FLEX alumni showed Charity Movie "Legends of Night Straj" on 3D at the Molodejnyy Cinema. They raised \$105 selling the tickets, which was used for a Halloween celebration at an orphanage on October 24.

## What does Volunteering Mean?

On October 5, FLEX alumni held a presentation about the meaning of volunteerism at Nasli Navras Center. Alumni shared about their experiences and gave examples of volunteer activities. Alumni and Nasli Navras trainers talked about International Volunteer Organizations with new volunteers at the Nasli Navras Center.

On October 14, FLEX alumni played a game with Nasli Navras kids and taught them how to fundraise. The children shared their fundraising ideas in groups and FLEX alumni played the part of donors. The best ideas were funded. Alumni taught the children how to write proposals to potential donors. After the game FLEX alumni were given gifts of chocolate and a Nasli Navras sign from Nasli Navras staff. Alumni hung this sign in the FLEX Alumni Room.

## FLEX Alumni Celebrate Halloween

On October 24-27, FLEX alumni celebrated Halloween in Boarding school 4, Nasli Navras Center, Lyceum 1. Alumni gave presentations, played different games, and shared their experiences about Halloween in the U.S. Kids were taught how to make a Jack-o'-lantern. The children were very excited and there was a friendly competition about which "Jack" was going to be the best.

Mike Arash, an exchange student in Tajikistan, was happy to join FLEX alumni and to talk about Halloween to the students of Lyceum 1. Students were dressed in costumes and were telling scary stories. A best costume was also chosen, which was a Devil outfit. It was a very fun celebration that the students enjoyed.

## "GO FORWARD" Seminar in Istaravshan



On November 8, FLEX alumni conducted a two-day seminar for more than 49 high school students from ten different schools in Istaravshan. The seminar was held in Lyceum 4. During the seminar alumni made presentations about "Gender Equality", "Leadership Skill", "Time Management", "Volunteerism", and "University Opportunities". After the presentation, alumni held a discussion with students. FLEX alumni also talked about USG exchange programs and gave advice to students. At the end of the seminars, FLEX alumni and students volunteered to clean the territory of the Lyceum.

## Presentation of the book "Independent Journalism" by Deborah Potter translated into Tajik

On November 10, Muhayo Nozimova USG alumna organized a presentation for the book "Independent Journalism" by Deborah Potter at the Dushanbe American Corner. This book was translated into Tajik and published with the financial support of the U.S. Embassy Alumni Grant Program. Twenty five university students, professors, and instructors attended the presentation.

The project was intended to address the shortage of Tajik language literature on journalism for lecturers and journalism students not fluent in Russian and English languages. "Independent Journalism" will be used as a basic guide for university students of journalism faculties and for practicing journalists.

Deborah Potter's book is unique in that it offers clear and accurate language and therefore serves as an effective guidebook for aspiring journalists.

At the end of the presentation all participants expressed their gratitude to the U.S. Embassy and USG alumna Muhayo Nozimova. They recommended that an electronic version of the book be posted on Tajik websites.



*Muhayo Nozimova presents the book "Independent Journalism" by Deborah Potter translated into Tajik*

## Flex Alumni Celebrate Thanksgiving Day at an Orphanage



*FLEX alumni playing with Orphanage Kids*

On November 28, FLEX alumni celebrated Thanksgiving Day with the kids of Orphanage #2 in Leninsliy district. Alumni divided into two groups. One group started to prepare food and other group played with kids. Alumni showed some funny skits for kids. Later alumni played basketball, soccer, volleyball in different groups with the children.

When the food was ready, children and FLEX alumni ate lunch. Everyone loved it. At the end alumni gave hats and socks for each child as a present.

## Alumni Conference Creates New Project Ideas



*All the conference participants were happy to have the opportunity to work together*

On November 21, PAS, Humphrey Program alumna Gulru Azamova, and a group of eight alumni organized an alumni networking conference, which was funded through an Alumni Grant. The country's 50 most active alumni were invited to participate in the conference, which began with the welcoming speeches by PAO Rachel Cooke and Alumni Coordinator Shafolat Kabilova.

The goal of the conference was to assist in the formation, development, and sustainability of alumni inter-group cooperation, networking, and association building. The conference objectives were to share successful past projects, brainstorm future activities, and think about sustainable cross-program networking.

The participants were from Fulbright, Humphrey, FLTA, Muskie, UGRAD, FLEX, Community Connections, TEA, and ETM programs. In the morning, each group gave a presentation about successful activities implemented by alumni from their program. In the afternoon they regrouped so that each table had a representative from each exchange program and brainstormed



*Hot dogs and hamburgers from the grill*

ideas for joint alumni projects. CAO McKenzie Milanowski led a Q&A session about how to write alumni proposals, and the conference also included a session on improving alumni networking.

The end result was a calendar of upcoming alumni activities, including New Year Celebrations for orphans and elderly people, FLEX presentations for American Corners, Religion Freedom Day, climate change discussions through radio broadcasting, the creation of a reading club, visits to orphanages on International Children Day, round table discussions on natural disaster awareness, Alumni Iftar and discussion on women in Islam, anti-terrorism discussions at schools and American Corners, and Alumni Fundraising parties for charity projects. Four joint community projects were drafted. They are devoted to disaster preparedness, social support to elderly and vulnerable children, revitalizing a reading culture, and domestic violence discussions at schools.

The participants were very pleased to have the opportunity to get to know each other and sounded enthusiastic about working together. After the conference everyone attended a barbeque at the

PAO residence, where several alumni were given State Alumni flash drives in honor of their excellent projects, and all the participants received USG alumni mugs. The participants plan to turn the conference into an annual event.



*Ambassador Gross came out to the BBQ to chat with the alumni and meet Tajikistan's first UGrad baby.*

## U.S. Study Tour Alumnus Shares Experiences



*Shavqat Juraev and Ayub Yakhyokhojaev  
at the Demonstration Greenhouse, Isfara City*

### Success

Shavqat Juraev was very impressed by agribusiness development in Portland, Oregon. Upon his return, he was eager to share his first-hand experience with community members and professionals. He initiated a series of educational activities for local farmers within his consulting job at the Advisory Center NAVID. As a result, two new greenhouses were opened in the Isfara region.

### Background

Shavqat, together with Ayub Yakhyokhojaev, an Alum of the Open World Program, has developed three training modules for local farmers: Greenhouse Gardening, Drip Irrigation and US Farming Technologies. Within two months of his return, he submitted a project proposal to the U.S. Government.

The Alumni Grant Program will conduct a two-day training workshop on Greenhouse Gardening for 20 farmers from the city of Isfara. "Grant writing was a good experience for me, helping me to develop my writing skills and to establish close partnerships with other USG alumni," stated Shavqat.

In April 2010, Shavqat brought 20 farmers from Isfara District together to conduct his greenhouse gardening training, with financial support from the USG Alumni Grant Program. The workshop included interactive sessions on technologies used by US farmers to produce vegetables in greenhouses. Interest was high: local farmers asked many questions related to greenhouse construction and cost, gardening technologies, irrigation systems, vegetable varieties and hybrids, and heating systems for greenhouses. The second training day was at the NAVID demonstration greenhouse, where the trainees were able to observe the new gardening technologies as they were applied. As a result of this training, two local greenhouses were recently opened in Navgulem and Kulkent areas.

In August 2010, Shavqat launched another education project on US Farming Technologies for Local Farmers, in collaboration with the Agricultural Producers and Processors Association of Soghd Province. The project focuses on the dissemination of information related to new technologies and practices in agriculture, the credit system, and the advantages of establishing farmer associations for Isfara district farmers.

"Sharing my knowledge and skills with local farmers to improve their work and lives is my current passion," said Shavqat in his interview.

## Tajik Exchange Student Finds New Opportunities, New Leg in Plentywood



Reporter Donna Healy can be reached at (406) 657-1292 or at [dhealy@billingsgazette.com](mailto:dhealy@billingsgazette.com).

[http://missoulian.com/news/state-and-regional/article\\_178f9578-faa1-11df-a66a-001cc4c03286.html](http://missoulian.com/news/state-and-regional/article_178f9578-faa1-11df-a66a-001cc4c03286.html)

***Firdavs Temirov prepares to put his prosthetic leg back on after getting a new foot from Jim Middleton in Billings. Middleton also made the rest of the leg for him with an American flag desiLoad-***

PLENTYWOOD - Against the biting winter wind, Firdavs Temirov, blue jeans tucked into the stump of his right leg, trudged gamely on crutches up the steep hill toward the school bus.

His host father and the family dog walked by his side, a morning ritual they replay each school day.

For some foreign exchange students, a year at an American high school opens up new opportunities.

For Temirov, it's given him a new leg, an artificial limb emblazoned with the stars and stripes of the American flag.

His story connects Plentywood, in Montana's northeastern corner, with Tajikistan, a Muslim country in central Asia, a country that sits on Afghanistan's northern border and was under communist rule until the breakup of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s.

Temirov's life in America has proved to be an unusual journey, not only for him but also for the host family that opened its home to him, the community of Plentywood that welcomed him and the Billings man who fabricated Temirov's new leg and gave it as a gift.

At 17, Temirov, nicknamed Phil, is a powerfully built teen who is quick to crack a joke or a smile. With a mop of thick black hair, he has been mistaken for a Native American. When he's puzzled by a word or unfamiliar expression, he furrows thick black eyebrows and crinkles his nose.

At school, teachers say he tries.

"He tries so hard," said Jane DeTienne, a barber in Plentywood who acts as the local coordinator for the FLEX foreign exchange program, a program under the auspices of the U.S. State Department.

For most teens, high school is about fitting in.

But for Temirov, this school year has been more about standing out. He speaks heavily accented English, his fourth language after Russian, Persian and his native Tajik. Although he is not devout, he is a Muslim in a predominantly Christian culture. And then there's the leg.

Temirov was born with a birth defect that caused his leg to dangle uselessly.

"When I was a kid, it was like every time I would like to try to hide my leg," Temirov said.

In Tajikistan, he underwent a dozen unsuccessful surgeries to fix the problem. Then, last year, a Tajik doctor amputated his leg above the knee. After each surgery, Temirov was given no pain medication, only antibiotics.

His first artificial limb was hinged at the knee by a bolt. It fit so poorly that it would slip off.

"Sometimes, the leg's in the sky, and I'm on the ground," Temirov said. "Like if I kick the ball. The ball would fly, and my leg would fly after the ball."

His new "American" leg has given him a sense of confidence and, perhaps, a new beginning.

Since getting the prosthesis in September, he no longer tries to hide his leg. For the first time in his life, he can run, if only for a few yards.

"I show it to everybody," he said. "Everybody wants to see the American flag, and when I show the stars, especially they like the stars."

**At an after-school** Halloween party for children in Plentywood, Temirov dressed as Uncle Sam, wearing a red, white and blue bow tie and showing the stars and stripes on his leg under his shorts. He twisted balloons into animal shapes to give to the children, DeTienne said.

"I would hope that we would be as proud of an American flag as he is," DeTienne said.

Though most Americans would be hard-pressed to find Tajikistan on a map, many of Plentywood's residents have gotten to know several Tajik exchange students.

Temirov is the fifth student from Tajikistan hosted by Joy and Del Kranzler, a couple who live in a small, squarish house on the edge of Plentywood. The house, with its bright aqua shutters, is tucked in the bottom of a coulee near a corral for the couple's horses.

Del, who has lived in Plentywood since 1968, is a spry 70-year-old who shovels the long driveway and swings easily onto a horse. He grew up on a farm southeast of Terry and retired after 36 years with the Montana Highway Patrol.

Joy, whose e-mail address is "mulefool," has worked for the past seven years as a Sheridan County dispatcher. She is also an emergency medical technician, has run a massage business and worked for 18 years at KATQ radio in Plentywood.

Joy's sister, Linda Knick of Plentywood, persuaded the couple to take their first exchange student. Knick hosted nine exchange students from various countries while her daughter was growing up. Although Del has two grown daughters from a previous marriage, Joy has never had children.

"I was never able to have children, so I've just been adopting them," she said.

Their first Tajik foreign-exchange student, Intizor Aliyorov, nicknamed "Zor," is now a junior at the University of Montana majoring in finance with a minor in math and economics. He plans to spend Christmas break with Kranzlers. Another of "their boys," who is in college in Nebraska, spent the Thanksgiving holiday with them.

Over the years, Montanans have helped their Tajik teens with everything from eye glasses to college admissions.

"It's just amazing to me how many people have really come out of the woodwork to help these kids," Joy said.

When the Kranzlers chose their first exchange student through the FLEX program, the couple knew almost nothing about Tajikistan, but they purposely picked a student from an impoverished country.

"Our house isn't fancy," Del said.

Their spare bedroom is in the basement, next to the washer and dryer. They figured a student from a poor country would be more appreciative of what they could provide.

Because their first experience, with Zor, was so positive, they kept requesting Tajik students.

"These are the best-behaved kids that I have ever run into in my entire life," Joy said. "They're very family-oriented, and they're incredibly respectful, honest and kind. They're extraordinarily honorable. They've never broken the rules. I have never had one tell me a lie. I've never had one of them even fudge the truth."

**Still, the Kranzlers** hesitated when they were asked to host a handicapped Tajik boy. The driveway from their house to the bus stop was steep. The spare bedroom was at the bottom of a flight of stairs. Winter in Plentywood can be brutal.

But Temirov's story touched them.

Even before he arrived, Joy tried to figure out ways to minimize Temirov's disability. She hit the jackpot when she walked into the Billings office of Rimrock Prosthetics. Jim Middleton, a prosthetist, volunteered to look at Temirov's artificial limb.

The old knee was "quite literally just a bolt," Middleton said.

Middleton applied to the Barr Foundation, a nonprofit that assists amputees, to supply Temirov with a more sophisticated hydraulic knee joint. Middleton spent about 20 hours finding parts, fabricating and fitting the artificial limb. The limb, which might have cost \$40,000, was done for free.

During college, Middleton volunteered at a Shriner's hospital, working on prosthetic limbs. For a long time, he had nurtured dreams of traveling to Third World countries to fabricate artificial limbs.

"It was kind of like an opportunity came to me, like it was delivered to me," Middleton said.

In early September, he swapped out Temirov's artificial foot for a better-fitting one.

"Every time he sees me, he hugs me," Middleton said.

Before creating the leg's stars and stripes, he repeatedly asked whether the design would cause trouble for Temirov once he returned home.

Tajiks are generally friendly toward the West, Temirov said. While more than 90 percent of the population is Muslim, there was a concerted campaign of secularization under Soviet rule, and only a small proportion of the urban population follows the religious ritual of daily prayers.

The presence of the Kranzlers' exchange students in Plentywood has been an eye-opener for Americans who tend to lump together all Muslims as radicals and terrorists.

At school, the Tajik exchange students have been exceptional students, said Rob Pedersen, the principal at Plentywood High.

"They've been good role models for our kids, just in how hard they work," he said. "They just pour their heart and soul into their academics."

The high school, which has a total enrollment of 124, usually hosts about three exchange students a year, he said. This year, Temirov and an Italian teen are the only two foreign students.

**Temirov, who dreams** of becoming an orthopedic surgeon, has been game to try most anything, from horseback riding to bowling. He's planning to try out golfing this spring. He has been particularly appreciative of things that Montanans have done for him, and, unlike the average high school student, he likes the school lunch.

Plentywood's teens know the Tajik students are Muslim, but it doesn't seem to get in the way of them establishing friendships, especially once they're involved in extracurricular activities, said Larry Henderson, a history and geography teacher at the high school.

In mid-November, Temirov used a wheelchair for a few days at school after he developed soreness from ingrown hairs on the stump of his amputated leg. He rolled quickly through the school's halls in the wheelchair, using his good leg to push off against the floor. Although he could manage it himself, other teens kept volunteering to push the chair and carry his books.

In study hall, Temirov joked easily with another teen in between reading "Brothers Karamazov," a Russian novel that he had already read in Russian. As he bowed his head over the book, he rocked the wheelchair back and forth with his left foot. When the last bell rang, before heading to the bus, he slipped into an office to exchange the wheelchair for his crutches.

Friends often ask the Kranzlers why they've hosted so many Tajik students.

"It's really our own very small investment in America," Joy said.

In some parts of the world, America, unfortunately, has a bad reputation, she said. When her exchange students go home, if they hear someone disparage America, she hopes her boys will tell a different story.

"I want them to be able to go home and say, 'No, Americans are not perfect, but you know, they're just like us.'"

## Social Media in Education



*Students use technology to communicate the globe*

Muskie fellows are also finding innovative ways to utilize new technologies in the field of education. An education fellow at the [University of Hartford](#), Ibragimdzhon Rustamov was previously featured for [his community service project](#), which used educational technology to help Connecticut students communicate with youth in Rustamov's native Tajikistan. Building on that project and on his previous professional experience, Rustamov interned at Relief International where he worked in the education and information technology departments.

As an intern, Rustamov used the Ning social networking platform to connect youth and educators from Bangladesh, Azerbaijan, and the US. Rustamov also trained a group of exchange students from the Middle East who came to the US to learn about social media. He believes similar technology will have a role in future work in Tajikistan, where web-based technologies and mobile learning can connect youth in remote areas.

Rustamov sees information technology as a tool for creating understanding and promoting cross-cultural connections at all levels of society. In his view, "the value of ICT literacy is only realized when all of the stakeholders benefit. This begins at the student level with increased knowledge about the world community and moves through his or her family to the local society and business community and up through the levels of government and into international businesses."

Recent innovations in technology can be used to increase government to citizen interaction, promote transparency, spread best practices in business, and connect students across borders. Returning Muskie fellows are well-poised to use their knowledge of technology to promote positive changes in society.

## Alumni Updates

Three Global UGRAD fellows hosted at Southeast Community College in Beatrice, Nebraska have settled into life on campus and in the community. Parviz Jamalov (Tajikistan), Tamar Chubabria (Georgia), and Farid Tuayev (Azerbaijan) visited their host capital of Lincoln, as well as the Strategic Air and Space Museum in Ashland, Nebraska. The UGRAD fellows were especially excited about a tour through a large corn farm, where they learned about the latest in farming technologies and had the chance to operate a tractor. The fellows have also attended several picnic and barbeque events in their local community, where they've gotten to know American families.

Fellows Ainura Musulumova (Kyrgyzstan), Yukothon Metinova (Uzbekistan), and Gulandom Rabieva (Tajikistan) hit the ground running upon their arrival to Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa. Volunteering 17 hours at the Waverly Food Bank, the fellows worked together with community members to pack Elderly Nutrition Boxes, a program which provides over 700 boxes to elderly and disabled residents in low-income housing throughout Northeast Iowa each month.

SUNY Plattsburgh fellows Rushana Nazirboboeva (Tajikistan), Tatevik Shaboyan (Armenia), Rivoiat Karamkhudoeva (Kyrgyzstan), and Djakhongir Jurayev (Uzbekistan) visited a middle and high school in the Beekmantown school district of upstate New York to share their countries and cultures with young American students. Each wearing their home country national costume, the students were intrigued from the moment the fellows entered their classrooms. The fellows rotated through a variety of different classes and conducted more than four presentations while visiting the schools. Rushana enjoyed sharing about the traditional Tajik tea ceremony and taught the students how to accept and offer a cup of tea. The American students had many questions about each country's food, holidays, music, clothing, and shopping. (3 photos attached, two of Rushana presenting and one of all four UGRAD students)

Global UGRAD fellows Violetta Skrypkyanova (Ukraine), Abdurahmon Safarov (Tajikistan), Seymour Valiyev (Azerbaijan), Khosiyat Amidkhonova (Tajikistan), Olga Rejep (Turkmenistan), Nargiza Ibotova (Uzbekistan), Evdokiia Romanova (Russia), Oksana Koval (Ukraine), Olga Rudakova (Russia) and Natalia Zadorozhnaya (Moldova) at Lincoln University of Missouri have been active with the international student association and engaged in community activities. The fellows recently participated in a multicultural fashion show in down town Jefferson City, where they modeled traditional clothing from their home countries. Following the fashion show, the group of students attended a Halloween festival at Six Flags in St. Louis, where they were able to enjoy the decorations and roller coasters at the adventure park.

*We welcome our alumni to contribute articles and information for the newsletter. If you would like to share your experience or success stories with the alumni community please contact [Shafolat Kabilova](mailto:Shafolat.Kabilova@state.gov) at [KobilovaS@state.gov](mailto:KobilovaS@state.gov)*

## Join State Alumni: Your Global Community for alumni of State Department exchange

### Who are Alumni? Your Global Community!

Alumni are past participants of U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs. With more than 1,000,000 alumni worldwide, State Alumni include world leaders, achievers, and influencers. Among this global community are 47 Nobel Laureates and over 300 chiefs of state or heads of government. They are politicians, CEOs, teachers, authors, artists, and most importantly, you! As an alumnus/a of a State Department-funded exchange program, you are part of a global community of the best and brightest. Build upon your exchange experience to advance your goals, your community, and our world.

### State Alumni: Opportunities and resources for you to connect with other alumni

- Hundreds of grant, job, and event postings
- Over 20,000 free titles in the online research center
- Access to apply for over \$33 billion in funding opportunities
- News about alumni projects; alumni success stories
- Participate in Q&A Live discussions with experts
- Share your reflections or research publications and join discussion forums
- Find fellow alumni to network with others in your field or your region
- Search for resumes or add your own to the global community

### Continue the exchange as alumni!

- Be active in your local alumni community
- Join State Alumni (<https://alumni.state.gov/>) and the international social network "Exchanges Connect" <http://connect.state.gov/>
- Discover, meet, share, learn, grow, and achieve!

## U.S. Embassy Dushanbe

Web: <http://dushanbe.usembassy.gov/>  
<http://russian.dushanbe.usembassy.gov/>

Sign up for the mailing list from the Public Diplomacy section of the U.S. Embassy Dushanbe to find out about these programs and more! Simply send a blank e-mail message to [usembassydushanbeprogram-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:usembassydushanbeprogram-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

\*\*\*\*\*

**JOIN U.S. GOVERNMENT ALUMNI, TAJIKISTAN PAGE  
ON FACEBOOK**

## American Corners Tajikistan



American Corners are partnerships between the Public Affairs sections of United States Embassies and host institutions. They provide access to current and reliable information from and about the United States via book collections, the Internet, and through local programming to the general public overseas or abroad.

Sponsored jointly by a U.S. embassy and a host country organization, an American Corner serves as an information outpost similar to a public library. The multi-media, book and periodical collections are open and accessible. Where possible, associated reading or meeting rooms are made available to

host program events and activities (i.e. author readings, speaker programs, films, workshops, meetings, and exhibits). The fundamental function of the American Corner is to make information about the United States available to foreign publics at large.

American Corner consists of a collection of books in English from and about the United States. The book collection may include reference titles, information products from the State Department Office of International Information Programs, works of fiction, business and government publications. English Language Learning materials. American Corners also provide access to U.S. information through access to the Internet, audio and video products, CDs, and CD-ROMS. The Corners are staffed by host institution personnel.

There are five American Corners currently functioning in Tajikistan in Dushanbe, Khujand, Kulob, Khorog and Qurghon-Teppa.

### Dushanbe American Corner

Central Scientific Library Academy of Sciences  
of Tajikistan, 33 Rudaki Avenue

Tel: (992) (37) 2275526

E-mail: [acdushanbe@mail.ru](mailto:acdushanbe@mail.ru)

Coordinator: Gulchehra Begova

Mob. Phone: 919215656

### Qurghon-Teppa American Corner

11 "A" J. Rumi Street  
Tel: (992) (3222) 29528

E-mail: [acqurghon\\_teppa@yahoo.com](mailto:acqurghon_teppa@yahoo.com)

Coordinator: Regina Sokolova

Mob. Phone: 981073042

### Khorog American Corner

Educational Center  
1 Azizbek Street  
Tel: (992) (3522) 22299

E-mail: [ackhorog@yahoo.com](mailto:ackhorog@yahoo.com)

Coordinator: Favziya Shonazmieva

Mob. Phone: 935583210

### Kulob American Corner

Kulob Branch Technological University  
Borbad Street, 9<sup>th</sup> microregion  
Tel: (992) 918 57 92 25  
E-mail: [ackulob@yahoo.com](mailto:ackulob@yahoo.com)

Coordinator: Abdulhamid Sharipov

Mob. Phone: 918579225

### Khujand American Corner

Asiri Public Library  
1 Lenin Street  
Tel: (992) (3422) 60313

E-mail: [ackhujand@rambler.ru](mailto:ackhujand@rambler.ru)

Coordinator: Madina Pulatova

Mob. Phone: 919122970

## Educational Advising Center

**American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS Dushanbe 734003, 86 Tolstoy Street Tajikistan**

To subscribe to the Education USA Weekly Update on scholarships and fellowships distribution list please send your request to: [EducationUSA@americancouncils-tj.org](mailto:EducationUSA@americancouncils-tj.org)